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Arms deal with Lisbon CIA's complicity alleged

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Buffalo, (New York), Sept. 22
(AFP)

Count de Montezuma, accused of illegal traffic in arms, said yesterday that his client had acted in good faith in buying 20 obsolete American bombers and sending seven of them to Portugal.

The trial of the Count and the pilot, Mr John Hawk, opened here on Tuesday.

The bombers are considered "war material" under U.S. law, and cannot be exported without the State Department's authorization.

Although Mr de Montezuma did not have such authorization, his lawyer pointed out that he had every reason to believe that the seller of the planes has received it.

The seller, an American, Mr Gregory Board, has also been charged with arms traffic, but fled before he could be arrested.

Meanwhile, Mr Hawk is insisting that he was hired by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which was behind the whole operation, but will not admit it for fear of embarrassing the U.S. in the United Nations.

The U.S. has promised the UN it would deliver no arms to Portugal which might use them to suppress nationalist rebellions in her African colonies of Angola and Mozambique.